

Native American Youth Services Literature Award

The American Indian Library Association

Review Criteria

Introduction

These guidelines for the American Indian Children's Book Award were created as a way to identify and honor the very best writing and illustrations by and about American Indians. "Books selected to receive the award will present Native Americans in the fullness of their humanity in the present and past contexts"

GENERAL CRITERIA

- "The book allows children and young adults to look, read, recognize and respond to the text and illustrations in a positive manner.
- Text is well written and appropriate for intended readers.
Illustrations are high quality with careful attention given to accurate and authentic portrayals of culture as well as artistic elements of design.
- Text and illustrations are infused with (or reflect) values and worldview of Native cultures such as significance of community, extended family structures, harmony between material and non-material aspects of life, and the respect for the relationship among all aspects of Mother Earth.
- Native religion and spirituality, if included is, shown in a natural, not contrived way.
- Gender is balanced and accurately portrayed. As with any culture, there are males and females with specific responsibilities and status. Females should be included (if appropriate to the plot) and portrayed as significant to the

culture (in contrast to the prevalent image of Native American women as marginalized beasts of burden).

- The illustrations accurately reflect the tribe(s)/nation(s) specified. Illustrations that provide accurate information help children learn that cultural and material artifacts vary across tribe/nation. Thus, accurate illustrations can strengthen the children's knowledge of diversity within Native American tribes.
- Native people are shown wearing traditional clothing in appropriate contexts.

PORTRAYALS GENERAL

- Presentation, in text or illustrations, of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, or class will be free of stereotypical depictions that are gratuitous and serve only to demean the individual or culture being presented.

PICTURE BOOKS

- Children are shown as members of extended families.
- The text and illustrations should accurately reflect the traditions, symbols, clothing, housing, and lifestyles of the nation(s) presented in the book.
- Artwork is not predominated by generic "Indian" designs.
- Illustrations should portray individuals as unique and genuine with distinctive physical features. Unless the illustrations are abstract or stylized, distinctive features should be portrayed from one character to the next.
- Traditional literature (myths, legends, folktales) specifies tribal origin and includes notes regarding origin and source for story.

TEXT

- Significant Native characters have personal names.
- The book contains notes that verify or otherwise support the accuracy of the tribal language when used.

- The characterization of significant Native characters is well-developed (as opposed to flat, stock or stereotypical depictions).
- "Warrior," "brave," and "chief" are used in proper context. Not all men were or are warriors or chiefs or braves.
- Inappropriate terms like "squaw," "papoose," "redskin," "paleface," and "savage," are not used as the norm or out of context.
- Generalizations such as "Indians lived in tipis" are not found.
- Redundant phrases like "Mohawk Indians" are not used.
- Use of specific terms for name of nations when referring to only one people, such as "Yaqui or Wampanoag is demonstrated.
- Parallel usage of terminology is consistently demonstrated i.e. "Indians" and "whites" or "Native people" and "white people"
- Stereotypical portrayals of Native people as "fierce", "violent," "stealthy", "stoic", etc., are not used gratuitously or out of context.

PORTRAYALS OF NATIVE PEOPLES

- Authentic and balanced portrayals of characters with regard to the wide range of positive and negative human emotions, behaviors, reactions, and lifestyles.
- Native characters demonstrate ability to achieve success on their own terms, rather than being portrayed as successful only if they realize the futility of traditional ways and decided to acquiesce to non Native standards of success.
- Native characters are portrayed as successful problem solvers rather than dependent on non-Native teachers, social workers, and other authority figures to rescue them from difficult situations.

- Content will be accurate.
- Accurate words are used to describe material artifacts.
- References and consultants with expertise in American Indian culture are cited.
- Accurate portrayal of Native people at varying time periods.
- Illustrations accurately portray the individual or nation discussed and enhances the text.
- Historical text avoid providing a distorted view that newcomers brought “civilization” to Native peoples and thus improved the Native way of life.
- Terminology is not used to demean Native cultures or to indicate superiority of European ways.
- Historical text and accompanying illustrations are placed in the proper perspective: the Native struggle for self-determination and sovereignty against the Euro-American drive for conquest.
- The perception of women as subservient drudges is not present.
- Native women depicted in the text are integral and a powerful part of Native societies.
- The roles of traditional elders are authentically presented.
- Native heroes are recognized by Native standards.
- The continuity of cultures represented, with values, religions, morals, an outgrowth of the past, and connected to the present.
- Historical text portrays Native peoples as human beings, members of highly defined and complex societies.

- Traditional Native people are portrayed as mature adults who work hard and make sacrifices in order to take care of their families, and for the good of their Nation.
- Dialogue is realistic and free of romantic overtones such as “My Son” or Tonto-Speak such as “Me go help”.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION MATERIALS (ages 13 -17)

- The characterization of significant Native characters is well-developed (as opposed to flat, stock or stereotypical depictions).
- Native characters are not portrayed as heroic guardian and caretaker of the environment.
- Native characters should not be portrayed as faultless or flawless and unrealistically heroic.
- Avoidance of inaccurate and unrealistic “coming of age” scenarios.
- Courage seen as integral to growth and development.
- Accurate portrayals of contemporary life among Native teens on/near reservations, villages, urban, and suburban areas.
- Realistic portrayals of the challenges and obstacles faced by Native teens in time period presented.
- Balanced presentation of authority figures.

AUTHOR’S OR ILLUSTRATOR’S QUALIFICATIONS

1. Author and or illustrator must be recognized by within the Indian community they claim to be a part of and be connected to the people.

BOOK AWARD JURY

All jurors must be members of AILA for at least one year prior to serving on jury. Prior to serving, jurors will be recommended by AILA membership and voted on by AILA

members during the annual business meeting on the jury. Composition of Jury: at least 2/3 of should be recognize members of their nation/tribe; geographic representation in terms of including on /or near reservations, villages, rural, urban and suburban of jurors is encourage; experience working with children and youth and/or reviewing, writing, teaching for children and young adults is suggested; a working knowledge of criteria used to evaluate books for youth about American Indians. The AILA President will appoint a replacement juror in cases where a juror resigns from the committee in the period between AILA business meetings. There will be seven members serving as jurors at one time.

NOMINATION CONSIDERATIONS

Potential award winning titles will be nominated and selected by members of the jury. Each juror may nominate titles in each category that represent the best in American Indian books for children and youth. The jury will reach its final decision by consensus.

RESOURCES CONSULTED

Hirschfelder, Arlene, Molin, Fairbanks Paulette, and Wakin, Yvonne (1999). American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children: A reader and bibliography Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Caldwell-Wood, Naomi and Mitten, Lisa. I is Not for Indian: (1991)

Reese, Debbie. "Markers of Authenticity" and " Problematic Elements that Signify Stereotypes and Bias," (2002)

Slapin, Beverly, Seale, Doris Gonzales, Rosemary. How to Tell the Difference: A Checklist. Berkeley, CA : Oyate, 1987